

STATE SENATOR • RAYMOND E. BASHAM • 8TH DISTRICT

Basham Press Release

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Plymouth Family Joins Basham's Crusade for Smoke-Free Dining *Even a Child Sees the Importance of Legislation*

PLYMOUTH—Senator Ray Basham (D-Taylor) has worked long and hard to establish support for his “Smoke Free Dining” Legislation, but was still surprised to find an ally in a seven year old Plymouth boy. On September 8, the Senator received a letter from Andrea Polka on behalf of her son, Josh.

“Josh asked how someone at his young age could stop smoking in public places in our state,” Andrea Polka wrote. “Josh knows that California has banned smoking in restaurants and wants the same here in Michigan. He says that when he’s an adult, he wants to move to California strictly for that reason.”

Senator Basham introduced Senate Bill 394, which would allow smoke-free restaurants and bars, on April 19, 2005. It still has not received a hearing or vote in the Republican-controlled Senate, despite growing public support.

“Josh and Andrea shared in their letter the same sentiments and concerns of many Michigan citizens,” said Basham. “Our children shouldn’t have to be subjected to the discomforts and dangers of secondhand smoke. A seven year old boy understands that—I just wish my Republican colleagues could.”

“He doesn’t like the smell, smoke gets in his eyes, it makes him cough,” the Polkas’ letter continues. “He cheers for joy if a restaurant has a sign that says *Smoke Free*.”

“If this bill gets passed, he would be the happiest child on earth! And his parents would be glad that he wouldn’t have to move to California when he’s an adult!”

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Senator Basham echoed their concern: “It’s a shame this young man is already thinking of leaving Michigan. We’re working hard in the Senate to keep our young people right here, and that includes providing good jobs, affordable education *and* a healthy community.”

Josh and his family want to do whatever they can to help. That includes sharing their concerns with the public and media, and those interested in speaking with Josh can reach him through Senator Basham’s office at the number listed above. People can also join Josh, Andrea and Senator Basham in the crusade for Smoke-Free Dining by visiting **www.smokefreediningpetition.com**.

“I am very proud of Josh, already working to make Michigan a better place at such a young age,” Basham said. “And I look forward to the day when I can take him and his family out to dinner anywhere in the state without worrying about cigarette smoke.”

Everyday, thousands of Michigan residents who patronize or work in or bars and restaurants are involuntarily subjected to secondhand smoke, and the consequences are far-reaching. According to a June 2006 report by the U.S. Surgeon General, nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increased their risk of developing heart disease by 25-30 percent and lung cancer by 20-30 percent. The report went on to state that even the most sophisticated ventilation systems cannot completely eliminate secondhand smoke exposure and that only smoke-free environments afford full protection.

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